

*The*  
Chicago Theological Seminary  
REGISTER

PART II

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*Volume XXI*

MAY 1931

*Number 3*

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OZORA  
STEARNS  
DAVIS



*In Memoriam*



## *It Is Not Far*

It is not far to that fair land of light  
For which I yearn in this forbidding night  
    When all dear forms have faded in the gloom  
    That shuts me in and makes my narrow room  
A place where loneliness and fear unite.

I need not scale the towering mountain height,  
I need not wrestle with enfeebled might  
    Because, from out the darkness of this tomb  
    It is not far.

To life and joy, where all the land is bright  
And tear-dimmed eyes are touched again to sight,  
    To where the fields of life are filled with bloom,  
    To where the flutes of hope again resume,  
    It is not far.

—OZORA S. DAVIS

## *As Seminary President*

By JOHN R. MONTGOMERY

*A statement at the funeral of Dr. Davis at the United Church of Hyde Park, Thursday, March 19, 1931*

Twenty-two years ago, Ozora Stearns Davis entered upon the presidency of The Chicago Theological Seminary. It was then an institution with a fine tradition and a large opportunity for an indefinite period of hard work.

He knew what it involved. He undertook it partly from a sense of duty, but mainly under the urge of a great ideal. This ideal, which kept him unceasingly at work during the greater part of his mature life, was the upbuilding of an institution dedicated to the training of men for the highest service to God and their fellow-men.

And when, after twenty arduous years crowned with achievement, in the development of his ideal, he was compelled by physical weakness to turn over his leadership to another, it was to one whom he most desired should be his successor.

Of the charming, lovable, courageous spirit of President Davis, and of his great life work, no one is better fitted to speak than his successor, President Palmer.

## *Ozora S. Davis*

By ALBERT W. PALMER

It is fitting that we should come for this service from the Seminary buildings which Dr. Davis loved and so largely inspired to this church where he did the last, and in some ways the most notable, preaching of his life.

There was a certain romance and high picturesqueness about Ozora Davis. His appearance was picturesque—his often shaggy, prematurely grey hair gave him an appearance of venerability beyond his years, and he had a way of dramatizing everything he touched. What a romantic career was his from his humble home in Vermont and his boyhood experience as a telegraph operator to distinguished posts as pastor, seminary president, and moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches!

Three words seem to characterize his life: "friendship," "fidelity," and "faith."

First comes "friendship." This was most vividly illustrated in his home life, his relations with his children and other young people—especially college students—and, very beautifully indeed, in his lifelong friendship with Frank G. Ward, whom, after student days in Germany and years of separation, he finally brought to share twenty years of work with him as dean of Chicago Seminary. It is good to know that, by his own request, their ashes will rest close together in the cloisters of the Seminary they both loved and served so well. "Lovely

and pleasant in their lives, in death they are not divided."

But he had other friends—many and various. They included Victor Lawson, destined to be the great benefactor of Chicago Congregationalism, and also the students who gathered year by year Thanksgiving morning to share the cheer of Dr. and Mrs. Davis' "New England breakfast." And, beyond these, many a perplexed or troubled minister who found in a letter or a talk with Dr. Davis a light upon his way. The spirit of this is in a little poem of his:

Be plucky, brother! 'Tis a rough old world,  
And many a scheme is into ruin whirled  
As time spins on. The other fellow's lucky  
As you are smashed? Well, what of that?  
Be plucky!

Be plucky, brother! Think that never yet  
Did new stars fail to rise when old have set.  
Grip hard and leash success some way or other.  
You will arrive. Cheer up!  
Be plucky, brother!

This friendship had a sacramental quality—it reached out toward the great Heart of the Universe in behalf of his fellow-ministers. Witness this beautiful prayer:

Our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the succession of the apostles which is guaranteed by the countless dedicated men and women who keep alive the conquering love of Christ and serve him in the church. We pray that the fires of devotion may burn brighter as the years pass. Give to thy preachers the message and the passion still coming from the living Christ. May thy ministers know him in the intimacies of their deepest life; feel him at their side when they go among the peo-

ple; be aware of his strengthening grace in the midst of their parish problems. Perfect their manhood; refine their sense of reverence and devotion; hearten them with such visible fruition from their labor as shall be best for them. Increase their courage; make the spiritual realities ever more vivid than the material world around them. And through them may thy people discern with new clearness the fact and the power of Christ. In his name. Amen.

The second word which characterizes Dr. Davis is "fidelity." His life was completely devoted to the service of religion. Like the theologian from Cambridge on the Charles,

He studied still, with deep research,  
To build the universal church:  
Lofty as is the love of God  
And ample as the wants of man.

To do this he prepared himself. After Dartmouth he studied at Hartford Seminary. Then he lived and worked a while in East London, studied in Germany, and took his Ph.D. at Leipzig. Dr. Graham Taylor has just been telling me of how, when Davis arrived a new student at Hartford, Dr. Taylor, then a teacher there, sent him to jail—to conduct services. "But I've never been in a jail and don't know what to say," protested Ozora Davis. "Well, at any rate, they can't get away from you!" was all the comfort he got from Graham Taylor. The other part of that story came out at a dinner in honor of Graham Taylor just a few weeks ago when he read a letter from a man, now an upright respected citizen, who was converted at that very jail service conducted by Ozora Davis in his student days!

Dr. Davis had three happy and successful pastorates, at Springfield, Vermont; Newtonville, Massachusetts; and New Britain, Connecticut. But the supreme service of his life was in the presidency of the Chicago Theological Seminary, to which he came while still young at only forty-three and to which he gave the most mature and forceful years of his life. He took up his task at a difficult and uncertain period and gave to it unstinted devotion. So much travel was required to raise money, enlist students, secure the support of the churches that, as William Byron Forbush has picturesquely put it, "Ozora Davis slept with a railroad time-table for a pillow!"

Great issues of policy had to be decided during his administration; and, splendidly supported by directors and faculty as he was, he nevertheless had to lead out in the movements, first of all, to remove to a location alongside the University of Chicago and then to build the beautiful and noble buildings the Seminary now occupies. These were great deeds, and they will remain as his abiding monument. How he felt about these buildings is admirably revealed by the following note which I find among my papers:

DEAR ALBERT:

In reading Willa Cather's story *Death Comes for the Archbishop* I found this quotation. It seems to me to sum up so clearly the influence these buildings might exert upon our students that I am sending it to you if you care to preserve it.

O. S. D.

"But the Cathedral is not for us, Father Joseph. We build for the future—better not lay a stone unless we can do that.

It would be a shame for any man coming from a Seminary that is one of the architectural treasures of France, to make another ugly church on this continent where there are so many already."

—The words of the Archbishop concerning the cathedral of Santa Fe to Father Vaillant (p. 244).

The crowning service of all the years of fine fidelity to the Church of Christ was his term as moderator of the National Council—the highest gift of honor within the power of the Congregational Churches of America. To Ozora Davis it was no empty honor but another occasion for high devotion. He went on speaking tours throughout the country and even to Hawaii, which involved speaking on an average of twice a week and took him a distance equal to twice around the world!

The third great word of his life—and greatest of the three—is "faith"! He was no systematic theologian, and he will not leave a theological system behind him as Jonathan Edwards did, for example; but he was a practical mystic, to whom the great unseen was no strange and unfamiliar place but indeed his Father's house. Let me give you his faith in his own fine eager words:

*Faith* is not blind acceptance of absurdity. *Faith* is the completion of a transaction, in which we commit ourselves to a personal relationship with an unseen and living Master. *Faith* is such an adventure as every sailor makes when he sets out for an unseen port. *Faith* is our response to our yearning for the God who has made us for fellowship with Himself. *Faith* is the answer of the vibrant human spirit to the music of Eternity.

Then this inspiring statement—entitled “This Is My Church”:

Here through beautiful services I come close to God and to my human comrades in worship.

Here in many ways I learn the truths by which I may live a brave, happy, and useful life.

Here I gain the strength by which I become that which I have learned I ought to be.

Here I find comfort in my sorrow, courage in my struggle, joy in my victories.

Here I come into union with Christ, my Master and Friend.

Next I would read to you his remarkably clear and convincing “Confession of Faith,” given in an address entitled “Thirty-three Years Out” at the meeting of the alumni of Hartford Theological Seminary, May 17, 1927:

And if, in one final item of a *confessio fidei* wrought out through thirty-three years of service, scant and poor at best, I were to sum it all up, this would be my Credo: “The unsearchable riches of Christ.” With each passing year I have felt, and yielded, to the sway of His spirit over mine. What He was, I long to be. As He lived, I long to live. His attitudes toward life I long to take with ampler service and more perfect obedience. I have found the Christian way the best way. In those depths of sorrow through which my reluctant steps have been forced to pass I have known the buoyant strength of His Presence. In the heights of my joy I have been sensitive to the radiance of His Being. The universe is to me ethical and divine because I find that One Man proved it true and I have also found that He was right. The sand in the glass may run for few or many remaining years; but this faith will not fail. I have been disappointed at times, often dismayed; but I never have been beaten and I cannot ever be overwhelmed. The faith of my Seminary days shines in the splendid sky today and, after thirty-three years, I declare that it is good for tomorrow and forevermore.

All these things, you may say, were written in the full power of health and strength; but the test of life comes when a man must battle against the currents of pain, weakness, and defeat. It would seem that he had already anticipated this in one of his most thrilling and appealing poems, called "The Hazard."

I love the man who dares to face defeat  
And risks a conflict with heroic heart;  
I love the man who bravely does his part  
Where Right and Wrong in bloody battle meet.

When bugles blown by cowards sound retreat,  
I love the man who grasps his sword again  
And sets himself to lead his fellow-men  
Far forward through the battle's din and heat.

For he who joins the issue on life's field  
Must fully know the hazard of the fray,  
And dare to venture ere he hope to win;  
Must choose the risk and then refuse to yield  
Until the sunset lights shall close the day  
And God's great city let the victor in.

When this time of testing came to Dr. Davis, as come it did in most dramatic and poignant fashion, it did not find him wanting. Here are the great depths of his religious faith, as recorded in "Life-Giving Convictions," which was the moderator's address at the National Council in Detroit written and delivered after his operation and the unfavorable medical report which followed.

In the church in Springfield, Vermont, where my ministry began in 1896, the chorister occasionally sang a solo, the words and music of which come back to me in benediction:

"If my immortal Savior lives,  
Then my immortal life is sure.  
His word a firm foundation gives;  
There I may dwell and be secure."

And so I knew beyond a doubt: *Death cannot stop me.* Within the past few years I have thought earnestly concerning the survival of the individual after death. Many of the problems involved may come back to me again; but there in the hospital, in the hours of waiting before the surgeons could do their marvelous work and in the long hours of recovery thereafter, these intellectual problems never came into the field of my thinking. There were no speculative questions; there were no doubts. I knew that I should go on; that my spirit was not a bubble breaking on the crest of a wave in mid-ocean; that I should still be I, as I have been through all the renewal and changes of my body and mind and spirit during the sixty-two years of my life on earth.

The promise of Jesus was plain and reasonable and utterly trustworthy. Many a great line from Browning reinforced this promise of Jesus. The confidence of the victor Christians of the past came ringing through my mind. It was the sure promise of Christ, however, on which I built the house of my immovable faith. Now I look forward to the episode of physical death as a glorious adventure. I have no more fear of meeting it than I could have had in the old college days when I went home to my father's house and the room prepared for me by my mother's love. I have even anticipated what I yearn to do in the Father's vast house of being. Now I know what Paul meant when he said that Christ breaks the bonds of all who have lived in slavery through their fear of death. Thus he brought me the living conviction of the reality and the power of the life immortal.

In the March number of the *Seminary Register* is an article by Professor Arthur H. Compton, of this University, on "Immortality," in which he asks, "Where does the light go when you put out the

candle?" and answers, from the physicist's standpoint, that it goes on and on! The flame dies, the candle may be consumed, but the light lives on penetrating the interstellar spaces. So will radiate through the lives of those who knew and loved him, and through them to many others, even to men and women yet unborn, the luminous radiant personality and far-reaching influence of our beloved Dr. Davis.

### *The Simple Song*

The sweetest songs the poet sings  
Are just about dear common things.  
To prove the depths and scale the heights  
Is grand: but common days and nights  
Are where we live and love and rest,  
And songs of these I find the best.  
And since I know the friendly ways  
And passing hours of busy days  
Are full of God and packed with glory,  
Living light, and love's old story,  
Sing of these and make me glad  
When the hours are long and sad.  
Now and then a song divine  
Claims the Master's mighty line;  
But the sweetest song he sings  
Gather 'round dear, common things.

—OZORA S. DAVIS

## *Administrator and Poet*

By SHAILER MATHEWS

It is not often that a poet becomes an administrator. Pegasus would not have made a good truck horse. Ozora S. Davis was the exception to the general rule. Perhaps this was because he came from New England, for, of all the misrepresentation to which that region has been subjected, none is more false than that the New Englander is cold. He has all the sensitiveness of the southern people. In Dr. Davis the poetic temperament was joined with practical judgment and the power of persuasion. He had, too, that other trait of so many New Englanders—an unwillingness to make a public exhibition of his emotions. As year after year we planned and worked together, I came to see more clearly this poetic quality of his character. It was several years before I made the discovery, and then only incidentally. Poetry is not usually associated with a discussion of the details of a Divinity School. I found that he had been reading Dante in the original with the son of one of his friends, and the two were making poetical translations of the Italian. And then he included me among those to whom he sent a poetic greeting from himself and Mrs. Davis at Christmas time. I don't suppose that Dr. Davis would have regarded himself as one with Milton or Browning, but one cannot fully appreciate his personality if one overlooks the poet's emotional response to ideas, the poet's love of beauty, and the poet's power of seeing life as a sort of allegory of that which is beyond life.

Of course, he paid the penalty of possessing this rare gift. It is difficult to harness a poetical temperament to the administration of an institution. Many a time I have seen him disappointed, even depressed; but I don't recall ever having seen him really discouraged, even in days when discouragement could have been pardoned. It was remarkable to see how he recovered from moods which were his by virtue of the fineness of his nature. He found his way out of them in ways familiar to all of us, but most often by his sense of humor and by his religious faith.

We all know his characteristics. One of the editorials written about him described him as a radiant character. That seems a little too glittering a term, but it is not far out of the way. I am inclined to think that his capacity to see absurdities in troubled situations and to laugh at them was a strong defense against the cynicism which threatens sensitive souls. In the intimacy of confidential talk he could estimate accurately men's characters, but his judgments were always well balanced. He refused to put a single label on any man. He was too sympathetic and too full of rich affection. But, he was no sentimentalist. Any man could trust his reputation to him, for Dr. Davis' insight was tempered by this human good-nature. None of the anecdotes which preserve some bright remark of his shows a witticism that would hurt another. He was too sensitively sympathetic to hurt another's feelings even by a laugh.

This power of kindly, smiling friendship was a part of his inherent nature, a part of himself. It

made him innumerable friends. Perhaps it qualified his power of prophetic denunciation, but it made him constructive. And really there is nothing less constructive than the so-called "prophet" suffering from auto-intoxication of denunciatory rhetoric. Our friend knew how to condemn wrong, but he had the rare gift of making men co-operate and of rejoicing in their co-operation. He was a carrier of friendliness; men caught friendship from his very presence.

He had also a pride of workmanship which the poet and administrator always have. He would grow enthusiastic over his reading and his writings, even while he was describing the administrative difficulties which he had to face. He loved to teach men to preach. I think he got as much satisfaction out of his books on preaching as out of anything he did. I remember the pride with which he said that his daughter, who had a technical training he never had, told him that his method in conducting a course in case work was sound. I don't mean, of course, by this to say that he had anything approaching the conceit of a small mind. It was the workman's pride in what he did: the realization of the significance of small things and that satisfaction which men have who find others adopting their plans and finding them good.

The real synthesis of the poet and administrator came in a religious experience which moved often into what would be called "mysticism." I suppose his poetic temperament made this possible; but his mysticism was not that of the recluse, but rather like that of St. Bernard, of the man who felt the

presence of God in activity and tasks. Everybody who accomplishes much in life has something of this same feeling. Men do not always talk about it, nor do they always call it "religion"; but they have a sense of being carried forward by a power greater than themselves, an assurance that beyond the life of sensation is something on which one can rest and so dare adventure. We all know how this blossomed out in the heroic last two years of his life, but it was nothing new. He had "experienced religion," as we used to say in New England. He had been lifted out of irresponsible living as a young man, had been carried on in his determined pursuit of education, had felt he was doing God's work as he preached, and had seen his loved ones as gifts of God. One could not talk long with him about any serious matter without this deep faith disclosing itself. In the conduct of the Seminary he was doing something more than running an institution. He had been set apart by God to promote a religion as emotionally rich as intellectually sane. He was too intelligent not to know the problems which such experience involves, but the experience did not wait upon answers. Thus it was that his character grew contagious. No doubt you all, as I, have repeatedly felt new courage and virility as we watched him and Mrs. Davis face the approach of his death. We all have to die sooner or later, but it is one thing to await a delayed death and quite another thing to go calmly about your business with your death warrant in your pocket. Without bravado or the overexposure of piety, he lived among us in the power of the eternal life.

We shall not often see his like. Such a combination of poetic sensitiveness and administrative capacity, of healthy humanism and religious serenity, is not within the power of many of us. And so it is that as I look back upon these many years during which he and I thought and planned and hoped together, I find myself thinking less of the great services he rendered his day and more of that rare soul who cheered others with his helpfulness and made life richer by making it more effectively Christlike.

### *In Memory of a Dear Friend*

A quiet Sabbath, with a threat of spring  
And prophecy in every bud and bulb,  
When through the Narrows that connect the seas  
Of Time-that-is and Time-shall-be-no-more  
Much shipping passed.  
Old steamers at full speed;  
Gray tramps that limped along  
With many a mark of struggle with the main;  
Fleet yachts, whose helmsmen viewed with mild  
surprise  
The battered sails and signs of weathered storm.  
And through the Narrows that connect the seas  
Of fleeting Time and God's Eternal Years  
There passed that day a vivid, buoyant barque.  
Her graceful lines were made to cut the waves.  
Her mastered speed was like a skater's skill  
That skims the ice, a thing of air and wing.  
Her sails were crimson-hued by ruddy suns.  
She seemed at home on both the sundered seas.

Yet not alone. A mystic convoy came  
To meet the graceful boat. Each bore the mark  
Of one designer's hand.

The convoy joyous neared the coming craft;  
He deftly turned his outward course  
Until he moved beside the smaller boat  
And hailed her with an old, familiar name.

Then broke the light that never flames on earth.  
Then thrilled the call that mortals never hear.  
Then stood revealed the hopes at which we grasp.  
Then love triumphant conquered time and death.

And thus there passed into that Silent Sea  
Of timeless Love the two slim, gleaming ships,  
The fair craft and her convoy; and we wait  
Until we too shall find at last our port  
Where they have passed, triumphant over death.

—OZORA S. DAVIS

## *A Comradeship of Forty Years*

By GRAHAM TAYLOR

Ozora Davis and I first met each other when he entered a class I was teaching at Hartford Seminary in October, 1891. And we have been comrades ever since, through forty years—just one half of my life and more than half of his. So no one beyond his own family circle can miss him more. Here and now I want to let him speak of our comradeship more than I, for I cannot tell what I think of him apart from how we felt toward each other.

When he reported for assignment to field work, I asked him what he had ever done with people. He replied that he had sold them newspapers in his home town, had been a telegrapher at the railway station there where his father was baggage master, and had taught in a high school and led a boys' Sunday school class. As he had never before shared with others their varied vicissitudes in city life, I told him he needed to come into touch with "the other half" while in Hartford. So I assigned him to personal work with prisoners in the county jail. Of what happened there on the first Sunday he went on duty, let him speak for himself nearly forty years after, when, addressing a large assembly at the City Club of Chicago, he said: "I remember so well that first service when I tried to speak. After it was over, I visited two prisoners whose names, and the numbers of whose cells, had been given me. I found in the first cell a man angry, bitter, hostile, and I suppose if I had not grown up in a railroad yard some of his vocabulary might have shocked me a little. It was intensely theological! He paid his respects to the judge who had sent him there and to the people who were keeping him there. But Professor Taylor told me I was to go to the jail, not to preach a sermon, not to try to convert anybody to anything, but to try to be a friend of any man I might meet there. I did it that day with that rebellious man and I shall never forget the day I did so, but I stuck to him. When I took the problem to Professor Taylor, he told me just one thing—*to stick*."

Taking a letter from his pocket, which he had received only ten days before, Dr. Davis added:

"It is a fine letter, such as has come to me about every month or six weeks through all these years, from a self-respecting, self-supporting, useful citizen of Boston—the man that I was sent to make my friend in the Hartford county jail. The beautiful human testimony of that letter is better than anything else I can say."

As an older student with an alert maturer mind, Ozora Davis took the lead of his classmates in all my courses, as he did in other departments, for which he was awarded the fellowship for post-graduate work in German universities. I was impressed and surprised by his fine command of language, with wide range of diction and discriminating choice of words. His style was the man, direct yet visioned, scholarly yet simple, emotional yet logical, practical yet mystically spiritual. Such it has been ever since, in lectures, sermons, and print, and even in conversation and correspondence when his thought emerged from his rollicking by-play of humor.

When he came back to Connecticut from his Vermont and Massachusetts pastorates to New Britain's influential South Congregational Church, to preach in its impressively churchly building, and to live in its too sumptuous parsonage, formerly the residence of a rich parishoner who bequeathed it for this use, Doctor Davis brought with him that "feeling for our infirmities" which had broadened, deepened, and been enriched so that he could be "touched by" and could touch all his fellows who in every condition of life needed comfort and guidance. In a lecture at Yale, he told the seminary

students of his endeavor to spread that fellow-feeling across racial and sectarian lines which divided New Britain's cosmopolitan citizenship. Foreign groups he found so responsive to his offer to share the use of his great church building that several of their assemblies for worship and fellowship were held there every week. But he regretted to warn the students that they might be surprised, as he was, in finding these adopted citizens "more willing to neighbor-up to the church than its native-born members were to neighbor-up to them." It grieved him that this fine reciprocity failed to survive his removal from New Britain.

No one to the western manner born was more at home along all the wide open ways to fellowship in the Middle and Far West. However he traveled on his far-flung journeys, or wherever he stopped over to be speaker and guest, he sought and found companionships by listening as well as by talking. Was there ever less remove between president and colleague in any institution of learning than here at our seminary faculty meetings? Were students and professors ever more at home than when he and Mrs. Davis shared their family table and altar with us at their "New England breakfasts," with which they opened the final week of every seminary year? And did two friends ever take more delight in giving token of affection to a mutual friend and colleague than Ozora Davis and Frank Ward did in inspiring the alumni to start the building movement for the erection of the beautiful commemorative hall as the first unit?

Of the fellowship that became a kinship of spirit

between Ozora Davis and me, on terms as equal and intimate as though we were brothers by birth-right, I let him express what I feel, as he did in addressing the City Club friends: "There has never been any change in the spirit of it, never any change in its high idealism, never any change in that love for mankind, that human and persistent and stubborn sympathy which sent me to the jail and brought me at last to stand side by side in the long years we have spent together here."

## *Memorials of the Faculty*

### *On the Occasion of His Retirement<sup>1</sup>*

Prophet and preacher to the churches—teacher and counselor of a multitude of students—pioneer in theological education—champion of the cause of peace—Christian by faith and works. . . . Tender and ardent in personal friendships—persuasive in speech—wise and cogent in writing—refreshing in personal contacts. . . . In honor of the distinction with which during a score of creative years as leader he has brought to pass his vision of a greater Seminary—and in token of their affection, this Missive is presented by his Colleagues of the

—FACULTY

### *On the Occasion of His Death*

The faculty of The Chicago Theological Seminary expresses its deep sense of loss at the passing

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<sup>1</sup>An illuminated manuscript with this text was presented to Dr. Davis by the Faculty on the evening of November 21 at a dinner in his and Mrs. Davis' honor at the Quadrangle Club.

of Ozora S. Davis, beloved comrade and president.

With his vigorous interest in helping and uplifting his fellow-men and in beautifying human life he combined an appreciation of scientific scholarship which made him an ideal leader for "Our Beloved Seminary."

During the twenty years of his presidency he knew each member of his faculty personally, intimately, and inspiringly. His contribution to the personal religious life of faculty and students is beyond mere words to express. His spirit and his fellowship continue with us.

### *A Letter to a Friend*

You ask me, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The Christian answer to this old question cannot be in terms of mathematical demonstration or scientific proof; but the solid reasons for an affirmative answer are none the less trustworthy and permanent, deserving of confidence and sustaining courage. I believe in the continued existence of human personality after the episode of death. I hold that personal immortality is a characteristic of all human life, and consider my own existence both before and after death as continuous and therefore immortal or deathless. The following reasons sustain my certainty on this point:

*It is the most reasonable conception of life.* Energy of every sort is conserved in the universe, which is one in substance or force. The most precious and

potent energy of which we have any experience is the human personality. It can control the forces of the physical world; it can think God's thoughts after him; it can conceive the perfect and seek to attain it; it can revere and adore and pray; it can act as if life were immortal. To my mind it is inconceivable that physical matter should persist through the growth and bloom of the rose while personality must perish through the transformation of death. Life, as we experience it in the physical body, is imperfect, but it is haunted and sustained by a clear sense of the perfect which never deserts it except when we deny or expel it by our own action. We know that there are values in the life of every day which we must realize sometime. Commonplace daily living demands life beyond death for its completion. It is incredible that the human spirit, which can produce the very music of God, however imperfect its strains may be, should be destroyed at death rather than tuned more perfectly for diviner strains.

*This conception of life produces the best results.* The conclusion derived from the conception of death as the end of all is simply "eat, drink, and be merry." On the other hand, the interpretation of all life in the terms of personal immortality has given us joy, ideal striving, ample satisfaction, and freedom from fear. I believe in life immortal because of what it does for me and for my world in the real business of living. If every act and every influence possesses value, not merely for itself, but for the life eternal, it assumes new meaning and

importance. If death is the end, if the tree fallen in the forest and the life of the useful man ended by death have precisely the same meaning, then, at least for me, the nerve of all high and brave endeavor is cut, and I can merely urge myself to make what I can of the passing hour for its own sake. But I reckon with the deed and the day, not as ends in themselves, but as means to ends which will surely be achieved in God's good time and way.

*This is the most certain source of zest and joy in life.* No act is complete in itself; no motive comes to final expression in any concrete performance. The assurance of the life immortal therefore puts the ground under one's feet in the work of daily living. And it is "hard work just to live" bravely and confidently in the midst of the pressure, the failures, the disappointments of human existence. The supreme tests of our mortal experience do not come in the critical hours so much as in the long, steady plodding through the tangled details of monotonous days. Life often seems so flat, so drab, so void of values! And it is, unless the significance of eternity is radiantly cast upon the daily round of works. Often I forget this, and fret at what seems the trivial significance of the day's work. Then I reach out for the strengthening grace of this mighty assurance; the ground seems stable now and the perspective of my universe swings into order and beauty.

*The noblest souls have held this faith.* Without question there have been strong men and women who have lived bravely and wrought well without

holding this assurance of personal immortality, but these are the exceptions and not the rule. It is true in the most general report of the facts that those who have lived most nobly and have left the highest examples of human achievement have been inspired and sustained by this faith. It is a source of strength and joy to be sure that one stands in line of unbroken succession with the victor souls of all time. In moments of hesitation or transient gloom, new courage is born from the assurance that I share the faith of Paul and Augustine, Frances and Luther, Moody and Brooks.

*The experience of Jesus warrants this faith.* This is the final ground for my faith in personal immortality. That Jesus lived in personal relationships with men after his physical death on Calvary, I do not in the least doubt. There must be an adequate reason for the recovery of the faith of the disciples following the death of Jesus. They said this was due to their personal experience in relationship with him which admitted no doubt as to his personal survival. The Christian Church rested, at the beginning, upon this as one of its principal foundations. It is incredible to me that so beneficent an institution could have been founded upon a blunder, or that such power over personality would be exerted by a mistake. Therefore the resurrection of Jesus has great force with me as an assurance of personal immortality.

*My own yearning for life immortal vindicates its reality.* This human yearning for the complete life is a God-given desire. It is part of the native and

instinctive demands of the human spirit. Deep in my soul is the yearning for the completion of my life in whatever relation there may be with God and my comrades beyond the episode of death. I am confident that this is not an illusion or a mockery. Something real and true has given it being, as a world to be seen has brought forth my physical eyes. God did not implant this yearning within me from caprice or to disappoint it. I shall "fare bravely, there as here," because my own spirit's deepest affirmation assures me that this is true.

Yours cordially,

OZORA S. DAVIS

### *Ozora S. Davis*

Another Saint has gone the upward way,  
Still climbing toward the beckoning, perfect day.  
His voice was ever lifted for the Truth.  
He understood this age and led the Youth  
To dedicate themselves in life's great quest  
To give to other needy souls their best.  
God was to him no cold and lifeless creed,  
But a dear Father, Savior, Friend in need.  
And, when disease gave warning of his death,  
He did not shirk nor falter, but each breath  
Spoke of his faith and love and joy and peace  
As he worked on until God gave release.  
And now that life on earth has reached its end,  
A countless number thank God for this *Friend*.

—CLARENCE A. VINCENT

## *Tributes*

"He was a great spirit and has been a constant source of inspiration to my own life. The radiancy of his life will go on and on."—Francis C. Ellis.

"Dr. Davis was one of those rare souls who bring Heaven down, and show us vividly the Lord."—John Timothy Stone.

"He was a man to love and admire. He was a great friend."—Clarence Pellet.

"The memory of the beautiful life of Ozora Davis rests as a benediction upon us all, bidding us be brave and true—even as he was."—Myrta K. Chandler.

"A great and good man has passed, whom to know was to love."—E. R. Lay.

"Not only the Seminary and the denomination have lost a great leader, but the entire Christian world."—Vaughan Dabney.

"A number of our leading ministers have sat under his instruction in the Seminary and been blessed by his life and service."—Warren H. Denison.

"The world contains no nobler men than Dr. Davis. Heaven is enriched by his arrival there."—G. W. Nash.

"His consecrated life and Christlike character I am confident will continue to live and be an inspiration to succeeding generations."—F. C. Eiselen.

"The warmth of his handclasp, the light in his eye, and his genial smile, created at once a feeling of friendship with Dr. Davis which will remain as a benediction with countless men and women all over the land."—Frederic W. Chamberlain.

"If every soul that is set free from mortal life could leave as buoyant a faith in the hearts of friends as has Dr. Davis, our touch with the eternal would be far richer."—David McKeith, Jr.

"'For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Full of love and charity for all God's creatures, a friend to all the world; im-

patient only of insincerity of self-sufficiency, and even there, mindful of human limitations."—William S. Macleod.

"A most brotherly man who believed Abraham Lincoln when he said that the Lord must have loved common folks because he made so many of them."—Robert W. Gammon.

"As a steadfast, sympathetic, and understanding friend in sunshine and shadow, there have been few to compare with Ozora S. Davis."—Henry H. Hilton.

"Dr. Davis had a faculty of letting folks know that he loved them, and with it an unrestrained willingness to serve men no matter what their station or what it might cost him."—C. E. Burton.

"For many years Dr. Davis had been a favorite preacher and speaker on scholarly themes at Culver Military Academy, whose staff feels the loss of a devoted friend and inspiring preacher."—A. S. Stoutenburgh.

"A gentle soul has passed to his reward."—Robert Cashman.

"A finer man I have never known nor a truer friend."—Lorado Taft.

"A brave and gentle soul who loved goodness and worshiped truth."—Herbert Hugh Riddle.

"He was a dreamer who built his dreams into concrete actualities; a seer who translated insight into words and deeds that other men could understand and use. He wrote me this when his term of life on earth seemed to be very short: 'I do not ask for length of days; I only ask for power to live fully all the days that remain to me.'"—Dwight Bradley.

"He was vitally interested in all creation—from desert lizards to noblest men, from purple sage to glowing mountain peaks—because he saw God in all."—Claton S. Rice.

"In the preaching and personality of Ozora S. Davis, Christianity found its 'lost radiance' with a special sparkle all his own."—Willis L. Goldsmith.

"Davis the great preacher, the brilliant executive, the skilled moderator—these are but the outer and lesser aspects of Davis the deep, strong, tender soul, the inspired and inspiring friend, the generous and understanding comrade in all his friends' woes and joys, who will always have his own place in our hearts, and whom we hope to meet again under brighter skies, in the courts and gardens of the living God."—Russell Henry Stafford.

"He could cherish a forlorn hope till he made it come true. He preached a genuine gospel with rare power and charm. He was a warm personal friend, a prince of comrades, a beloved teacher."—Carl S. Patton.

"A young immigrant from Persia (the country I came from) died. Dr. Davis opened his own home for the funeral. In the Persian-Assyrian Brotherhood Dr. Davis had organized for us, he always made us feel he was one of our number. He knew no race or class distinction; he was humility personified."—Paul S. Newey.

"Whoever has come in touch with him shall never forget his vigorous personality and his zeal in the cause of education for the ministry and shall never fail to appreciate his good will."—Kyoji Tominomori (for the Theological Faculty of Doshisha University).

### From *The Christian Century*

Ozora Davis had two years more of life than were promised him when the physicians told him that he had only six months to live, and he made them wonderful years, among the most fruitful and probably also among the happiest of his useful and happy life. Within those two years, after he had retired from the presidency of Chicago theological seminary so that the shadow of his passing might not fall upon the opening of the new administration, he served as moderator of the Congregational national council, wrote the life of an old friend who had been the seminary's greatest benefactor, taught homiletics, and preached. To sit down and wait with a long face for death was not his way of meeting the great adventure. He

went on living, not without pain but with a continuance of the great joy that life and work and friendship always gave him. In one respect he did not think of death as an adventure at all, for he was so sure of the essential quality of what he would find on the other side of it that the risk seemed to him negligible. He was a great preacher and a great teacher of preachers. Few administrators are privileged to see such developments in their institutions as he saw in the seminary of which he was president for twenty years. One could wish that the word, radiant, were not applied so indiscriminately, so that one might hope to convey some sense of the extraordinarily contagious quality of his faith and cheer by saying that he was a radiant personality.

### From *The Congregationalist*

Dr. Ozora S. Davis, whose brave battle with disease came to an earthly end by his death on a train near Topeka, Kan., on March 15, en route from California to Chicago, had a unique distinction among the outstanding leaders of our fellowship in this generation. He was among them all, probably the most widely and deeply beloved. He knew more men, and more men knew him, with a larger measure of intimacy, than was the case with any other man of equal eminence among us. He had a genius for brotherliness, and the circumstances of his life gave him unusual opportunity for its manifestation and expression. His early life as a railroad man and telegrapher, his pastorates, his Moderatorship, and his travels throughout the West and Mid-West in the difficult and exacting earlier years of his Presidency of Chicago Theological Seminary, brought a human personality of rich quality into a world of human contacts, which he exploited as much out of natural disposition and interest as out of Christian zeal and enthusiasm. In Dr. Davis the power of Christian grace conspicuously glorified all that he was by nature.

Dr. Davis combined in his personality well balanced abilities and powers which were reflected in the variety of his achievements. He was an outstanding pastor; his post-graduate studies and his scholarly attainments fitted him for the

academic distinction that determined his major work; he was an author of notable books; and he was a journalist with a real craftsman's gift for popular expression. In this last character, in addition to his frequent contributions to *The Congregationalist*, Dr. Davis, with Mrs. Davis, for a number of years conducted a weekly page in our contemporary *Zion's Herald*,—a notable journalistic achievement and an important link between the Congregational fellowship and that great Methodist communion out of which Dr. Davis originally came into the Congregational way.

The journalistic collaboration of Dr. and Mrs. Davis emphasizes what he himself would have appraised as his greatest asset—a home life of beautiful harmony and a life companionship enriched at every point of contact by a community of intellectual and spiritual idealism motivating a common creative activity. Grace Tinker Davis is known to our readers as an author and contributor in her own right, but her literary labors have been a part of a life of love and devotion characterizing a Christian union and a Christian home. In emphasizing the loss to our fellowship in Dr. Davis' passing, we think particularly of those whose bereavement is deepened by the memory of all that he meant in the family circle. The spiritual world was very real in that atmosphere during all the tragic suffering and the impending change of the past two years; the fact of death has not destroyed the communion of love and the sense of the permanency of the spiritual; but death in a physical sense none the less leaves a great void. An innumerable company of prayerful and sympathetic friends will join the immediate circle of those near and dear to Dr. Davis as they sigh

“ . . . for a touch of a vanished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still.”

*The*  
Chicago Theological Seminary  
REGISTER

PART III

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*Volume XXI*

MAY 1931

*Number 3*

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CLARENCE  
AUGUSTINE  
BECKWITH



*In Memoriam*



WE, the Faculty of The Chicago Theological Seminary, express our heartfelt grief on the occasion of the death of our beloved colleague, Clarence Augustine Beckwith. We held him in the highest esteem for his profound learning, his rare gifts as teacher, and his devotion to the Seminary. We loved him as a loyal friend. He imparted to scores of his pupils a deep religious insight, and gave them a vision of the larger task of the church of today. They have caught from him his enthusiasm for the search of truth, and have come to share with him his trust in God and faith in man.

*Clarence Augustine Beckwith*  
*An Appreciation*

By MATTHEW SPINKA

A truly great and good man has passed on! A scholar of no mean attainments, yet he was modest withal, kindly and courteous. He possessed wisdom that comes of deep study, courageous living, and insight into the verities of life. And above all, he had a delicious, whimsical sense of humor.

Like hundreds of other students of his, I remember him best of all as an immensely stimulating teacher. The most obvious thing about him was the fact that his learning was genuine; he was a scholar, thoroughly at home in his subject. In lecturing, he always stood: tradition had it that he never occupied his "chair of theology."

His teaching was the most perfect example of the Socratic method I have ever known. Always kindly, usually with a quizzical twinkle in his eye, he bore upon the students with his penetrating, illuminating questions. He never gave away what they could discover for themselves. I remember his favorite saying, that he conceived his function as a teacher to be that of a gad-fly, stirring the lazy bullock into a frantic gallop. In his classes, no one could sink into "comfortable receptivity," for when one least expected it the gad-fly would begin buzzing about his ears. Furthermore, he never told his classes what he thought about a subject: he would present each view with scrupulous fairness—on

occasion he could be a veritable *advocatus diaboli*—and let it go at that. Some of us discovered that his own view was usually tacked on to the end. But Professor Beckwith never owned it by any special warmth of eloquence or show of zeal. It was for the student to make up his mind as to which view was nearest the truth.

His illustrations were apt and illuminating. They were often homely, drawn from his own daily experience. He had eyes that could discern a beautiful simile or a deeper meaning in the most "ordinary" events. The most abstruse philosophical or theological concept would become lucid or at least comprehensible after Professor Beckwith got through with it. It would "jump like a bug on a hot stove," as he used to say.

To come in contact with Clarence A. Beckwith was not only to gain new insight into life, but new faith in life and in humanity. His was a stimulating, invigorating personality. Life for him meant intensely and meant good. He never rested content with mere negations. His life was rich in emotional content, and this quality did not diminish as he grew older. "The best is yet to be" was his favorite quotation. In fact, he reminded one altogether of *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. I have met some people who thought him somewhat austere and distant; but they could have known him but slightly. Like a true New Englander, he was averse to showing his emotions in public; but that was his "protective coloration." His true personality is revealed in his wonderful letters, especially in one instance where he referred to the farewell dinner given in his

honor by the Board of Directors on the occasion of his retirement from active service. He speaks there of his fear that he might not be able to control his feelings, and reveals how deeply the occasion moved him, although those who saw him then might have thought him almost impassive.

Few people perhaps realized his appreciation of literature and poetry. All his life he was an omnivorous reader, and to the last he kept up his work of professional reviewing of books in the field of theology and philosophy. But besides this professional interest, his reading ranged over the entire field of literature. There could have been but few really worth-while books he had not read. His letters are profuse in allusions to his reading. Matthew Arnold and Emily Dickinson seem to have been his favorite authors. It is rather startling to find him prefer Sinclair Lewis to Henry van Dyke. He was so familiar with the best English poetry that even his quite casual letters not infrequently bear witness to it. Moreover, he himself was a poet in his outlook upon life and in his interpretation of it. Although he never published any poetry, he wrote a great deal of it. His letters show how natural it was for him to express his thought, both serious and whimsical and fanciful, in verse, even though it was often only doggerel. It was not his intention to produce highly polished and finished poetry; but he wrote in verse so easily that he made use of his gift on many occasions without aspiring to technical perfection.

Letter writing is now commonly conceded to be a lost art; Professor Beckwith's letters remind one of

those spacious days when letter writing was a fine art at its best. His letters to the various members of the Faculty are full of half-serious, half-playful discussions of men and books, events, high themes and the most commonplace occurrences, mirroring with faultless accuracy and crystal clarity the moods of his soul, and revealing his rare gift to see "sermons in stones and good in everything." I dare say that if published, they would soon secure for themselves a place of honor in literature.

Finally, Professor Beckwith's tender friendships, his devoted loyalty to his colleagues of the Faculty, reveal a trait as charming as it is touching. Ever since the announcement of Dr. Davis' fatal illness, his friend Beckwith wrote him a letter every day. He never missed once, until his own illness incapacitated him for writing during the last weeks of his life. The unfeigned love for Dr. Davis, the avowed admiration in which he held Graham Taylor, the loyal support he gave to Dean Ward and other members of the Faculty, were extremely touching. He held in the highest esteem the members of the Board of Directors with whom he became more closely acquainted. He was an ideal church member, always loyal to his pastor, and regular in his attendance upon the services of worship. If he could not go to church, he felt that he had missed something. Coming, then, to his own home life, his letters reveal such beautiful and truly sacramental relationships that one dares but to stand on the threshold.

Such was this great scholar, endowed not only with a brilliant mind, but also with a gift to interpret the meaning of life lucidly; possessing a kindly disposition, poetic insight, and a true, loyal heart. Who can measure the influence such a man exerted upon his generation? Truly, the world is a better place for his having lived in it.

## *Professor Beckwith's Writings*

By A. C. McGIFFERT, JR.

Dr. Beckwith was a frequent contributor of articles to such periodicals as the *American Journal of Theology*, the *Journal of Religion*, and the *Homiletical Review*. He was a painstaking and persistent reviewer of theological literature. Because of his knack of summarizing the essential contents of a book in terse phrase, topped off with a keen thrust of critical analysis, he was constantly in demand for this laborious and often thankless but necessary and widely helpful service. In most of his public writing Dr. Beckwith declined to reveal the rich vein of his wit; but in his reviews it occasionally flashed forth delightfully.

He was an editor of *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. In addition to untold anonymous contributions to that indispensable *Encyclopedia*, he wrote sixty-eight of its signed articles. Their range is astonishing. He dealt with biography ("Albertus Magnus," "Schopenhauer," "Voltaire"); with the Bible ("Son of Man," "Biblical Conceptions of Soul and Spirit");

with historical theology ("Arminianism," "Rationalism and Supernaturalism"); with constructive theology ("Justification," "Mediator," "Christology," "God"); with ethics ("Conscience," "Perfectionism"); with philosophy ("Kant," "Idealism," "Romanticism," "Pantheism"); with American religious thought ("Half-Way Covenant," "American Contributions to Theological Science"). One regrets that he was not called upon for more articles in this field of American religion in which he was so competent a scholar. The last of this amazingly varied and by no means complete list is an article on William Wordsworth. My guess is—and I base it not on Dr. Beckwith's published writings but rather on his letters—that Wordsworth was one of his favorite poets. His correspondence, at least, reveals his constant and tender awareness of those movements and beauties of the world of nature, which the Lake poet so superbly interpreted.

In his books, however, the ethical emphasis is supreme. *Realities of Christian Theology* (1906) is frankly a transitional treatise. Dr. Beckwith himself classed it with W. A. Brown's *Christian Theology in Outline*, as "a fresh interpretation of Christian experience in terms of modern intelligence." It gives evidence of Dr. Beckwith's interest in the influence of psychology on theology, a subject to which thereafter he devoted increasing attention.

In his *Idea of God* (1922) he moved into an ethical theism congenial to the pragmatists. In this magnificent book Dr. Beckwith first sketches the high lights of the history of the idea of God with a

compact amplitude of scholarship that it is a joy to follow. He next deals critically and constructively with the major problems that face the religious thinker. He concludes with a climactic chapter on "The Living God." Rather than speak at length of a book so familiar to Chicago Seminary men and one in which we take such pride—a book, too, so widely quoted—I should like to reproduce the touching and revealing phrases which Dr. Beckwith penned on the flyleaf of a copy of the book he presented to me on December 23, 1926.

MY DEAR MR. MCGIFFERT:

To you who will fulfill my joy I wish I might dedicate this work; I do this in my heart and with love.

C. A. B.

This book touches only the outermost fringe of its great theme; for the God of our experience—

Both baffles and beckons

Both reveals and hides himself

Both intimate and yet strange

Both tender love and inexorable justice

Both creates all opposites and reconciles all contradictions

Both ever changing and yet the changeless One.

Our fathers trusted in him and were not ashamed.

He is our God who is both our Voyage and our Haven—

Life of our life,

Light of our light,

Love of our Love.